

Manzullo asks for U.S. 20 funds

Congressman requests more than \$800 million in funds from TEA-3.

BY TRAVIS MORSE
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ROCKFORD — Though he doesn't expect to get it, Congressman Don Manzullo requested \$600 million in federal funds from the new federal transportation appropriations bill for the four-lane U.S. 20 project.

Along with the other Illinois congressmen, Manzullo, R-Egan, submitted his proposal this week as part of the early competition in the federal legislature for new transportation funds. The appropriations bill, known as TEA-3, is a six-year federal highway program Congress will approve this fall. The funding could be used for any segment of the 50-mile expansion, including the Freeport and Galena bypasses.

"We're asking for as much as we can get," said Rich Carter, a

spokesman for Manzullo.

The total tab for Manzullo's requests, which include six other projects in the 16th District, is \$826.5 million. During the 1998 federal highway program, Manzullo was able to secure \$3.8 million for the U.S. 20 project.

According to a news release from Manzullo, any money Congress dedicates to the U.S. 20 widening project will be minor compared to the estimated \$600 million needed to complete the project. He would like to use any federal funds earmarked for the

project to encourage the state to kick in the rest of the price tag, since more than 95 percent of the federal road money in the TEA-3 legislation will go directly to states in the form of formula grants. "Congressional earmarks will not build this project," Manzullo said in a news release. "We must let our state officials know that this regional project has tremendous support, and that we expect a large chunk of the federal formula money to be spent on Route 20."

Carter said Manzullo is

encouraging Freeport Mayor Jim Gitz and Galena Mayor Richard Auman to contact Gov. Rod Blagojevich's office to let the state know how important the U.S. 20 project is. He said state Rep. Jim Sacia has already spoken to the governor about this project.

"We really have to come together to let the state of Illinois know how much of a priority this project is," Carter said.

Carter said the federal fund amounts will be decided by October.

Other Illinois road projects that may be funded through Manzullo's requests include an expansion of Route 30 in Whiteside County and three projects in the Rockford area, including the removal of a Cherry Valley tollbooth on I-90, the expansion and reconstruction of West State Street and an expansion of North Second Street in the northern part of Winnebago County.

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